

House Republican Press Release

April 18, 2006
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Sawyer Votes to Protect Confidential Press Sources



Shield Law Would Prohibit Government from Compelling Journalists to Testify

HARTFORD – The state House of Representatives approved legislation last night that would shield journalists from being compelled by any branch of government from having to reveal information obtained or received in confidence in gathering, receiving, or processing information for potential communication to the public or the identity of the source of the information. Similar “shield” laws are currently on the books in 31 states, as well as Washington, DC.

The bill also protects non-confidential information the media possess from subpoena with an exception for information necessary to a pending investigation, prosecution, or civil action not otherwise available, and of interest to the public.

Provisions in the bill make information and the identity of a source obtained in violation of the bill inadmissible in any action, proceeding, or hearing before a judicial, executive, legislative, or other body.

Representative Pam Sawyer (R-Bolton) voted in favor of the measure, which passed the House last night by a vote of 107-34 following a three hour debate.

“In the process of reporting important and critical news, journalists often rely upon the ability to use confidential sources,” said Representative Sawyer. “This measure protects journalist who rely on confidential sources, and allows them to report news in the public interest without fear of indictment or prosecution to obtain their information or sources.”

The bill now heads to the state Senate for action there.